

SENATE BILL 653

By Bowling

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,  
relative to licensure.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-108(d), is amended by adding  
the following as a new subdivision:

(3)

(A) The state board of education must approve alternative teacher endorsement and licensure pathways for current and prospective educators. The pathways must include pathways for the addition of endorsement areas for current educators, alignment with other professional licenses and certifications, and exceptions to standard licensure requirements for advanced degrees and professional experience the state board of education deems sufficient to ensure the quality of the educator.

(B)

(i) The state board of education must approve a process for an LEA or for two (2) or more LEAs working together to establish a district teacher training program for the purpose of recommending current educators with a professional license or higher for additional endorsements.

(ii) The state board shall establish the minimum educational requirements needed for current educators to participate in district teacher training programs. The minimum educational standards must include the ability for current educators to add endorsement areas. The

ability to add additional endorsements shall include credit for other professional licenses and certifications held by the current educator and exceptions to standard additional endorsement requirements for certain advanced degrees and professional experience that the board deems sufficient.

(iii) The training program established by this subdivision (d)(3)(B) must certify that the educational requirements established by the state board for the additional endorsement have been met by the current educator. The process described in this subdivision (d)(3)(B) is in addition to any process already established by the state board and allows current educators to gain credit toward additional endorsements through online conferences, seminars, workshops, or collaborative learning experiences, including micro-credential courses.

(iv) A current educator seeking an additional endorsement through a district teacher training program established under this subdivision (d)(3)(B) is not required to take an assessment or enroll in a teacher preparation program to receive the additional endorsement.

(v) The department of education shall create a process specifically for reviewing district teacher training programs under this subdivision (d)(3)(B).

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-101(e), is amended by designating the existing language as subdivision (1) and adding the following as a new subdivision:

(2) This subsection (e) does not apply to a license being issued through an alternative licensure pathway established by the state board of education pursuant to § 49-5-108(d)(3).

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 5, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) Notwithstanding this chapter, the department shall issue a practitioner license to teach in grades nine through twelve (9-12) to any applicant who:

(1) Holds at least a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution of higher education that includes at least twenty-four (24) semester hours of credit in the content area in which the applicant will be teaching;

(2) Has at least five (5) years of work experience in the subjects to be taught; and

(3)

(i) Enrolls in and successfully completes a teacher preparation program approved by the state board of education. The program must not exceed nine (9) semester hours that are designed to meet the knowledge and skills for teacher preparation; or

(ii) Completes a training course offered by an LEA that meets requirements established by the state board.

(b) The practitioner license issued under subsection (a) must bear an endorsement to teach only in a subject area in which the applicant is approved to teach. Applicants seeking a practitioner license under subsection (a) shall not receive an endorsement to teach a course in which an end-of-course examination is required for

students to satisfy graduation requirements established by the state board under § 49-6-6001(a).

(c) The practitioner license issued under subsection (a) is valid for three (3) years and may be renewed once.

(d) To obtain a professional license after holding a practitioner license issued under subsection (a), an educator must:

(1) Have three (3) years of teaching experience;

(2) Have the recommendation of the director of schools, charter school leader, or charter management organization leader; and

(3) Complete professional development requirements established by the state board.

(e) Upon advancement to a professional license under subsection (d), an educator may add endorsements pursuant to licensure rules and policies established by the state board.

SECTION 4. The state board of education is authorized to promulgate rules necessary to effectuate the purpose of this act. The rules must be promulgated in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

SECTION 5. Section 4 of this act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. All remaining sections of this act take effect January 1, 2022, the public welfare requiring it.